

Managing (ourselves in) behavioral emergencies in the remote setting

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What makes the wilderness a great place to have a crisis?

All Play:

- New environments can be anxiety producing
- Medication changes
- Continuous contact with peers
- Lack of distraction
- Technology withdrawal
- Silence as the unfamiliar foe
- Lack of coping skills
- Stress Induced mental health crisis
- Prior trauma

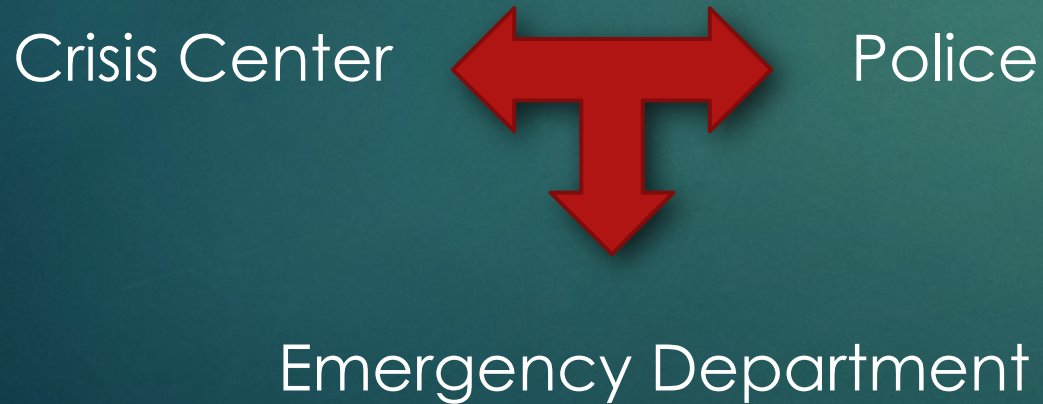


Wilderness vs Urban

Evacuations from the remote context – the how of it.

Urban Context

Acute presentation



Wilderness Context

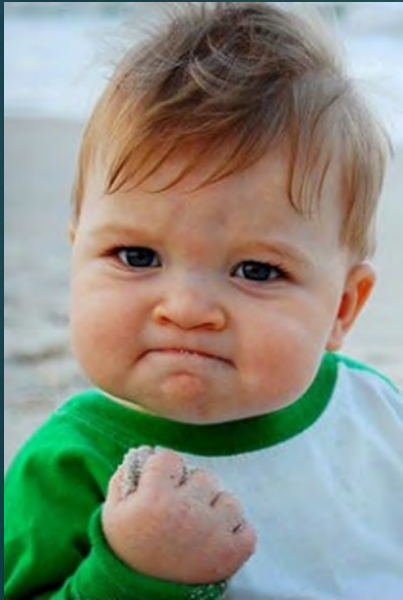
Acute Wilderness Presentation



First things first - Scene Safety

Assess: How serious are the behaviors?

Behaviors



Disruptive



Destructive



Disruptive Behaviors:

Bullying (can also be destructive)

Disordered Eating

Foul language

Anxiety attacks

Threats of Self Harm

All manner of drama

Destructive Behaviors

Threats to Safety

Physical and Verbal Aggression- threats of harming others

Verbalizing Suicidal Intent with Lethal, Available Plan

Bizarre and erratic behaviors

De-escalation

“To understand what another person is saying, you must assume that it is true and try to imagine what it could be true of.”
(Miller’s Law)



A technique used during a potential crisis situation to attempt to prevent a person from causing harm to himself/herself or others

- Three Main Factors
 - Self control: track your own responses
 - Physical presence: use supportive body language
 - Safety: personal space and exits
- Risk is not a threat
- Do you have to do this right now?

Remote management; Skills for the HOW...



Goal:

Stabilize and transport to
definitive care

Addressing Suicide and Self-harm

- Appropriate concern, appropriate actions
- Mandate to pass to higher level of care
- Can be connected and straightforward
- Continuous presence
- Removing lethal means, when possible
- Participation, empathy, distraction, **safe minutes**



Gone are the days of safety contracts

Responding to Destructive Behaviors

Stabilize and rapidly evacuate.

Call 911 when available from the field.

Remove others from exposure to harm.

Eliminate lethal means.

Calming yourself is the best means of calming the other.

It's ok to run.

De-escalation

Expert consensus.

Respect Personal Space

Do not be provocative

Establish verbal contact

Be concise

Identify wants and feelings

Listen closely to what the participant is saying

Agree or disagree

Set clear limits (enforceable statements)

Offer choices and optimism

Debrief the participant and staff

Richmond, et al 2012

The way out of the woods with drama

Regulation

Avoid power struggles

Use enforceable statements

State/set expectations

Avoid participation as acting bored might be the right thing to do.

Psychological First Aid



CALM
SAFETY
CONNECTION
EFFECTIVE ACTION
HOPE

GOALS:

- ▶ Decrease arousal and re-establish safety.

Engagement, involvement and service

The show must go on TOOLS:

▶ **COMBAT HELPLESSNESS:**

- ▶ What has worked in the past?
- ▶ Activities of wilderness life

▶ **ENGAGE THE CORTEX**

- Tents
- Dinner Crew
- Maps
- Leadership

Hideout in the present.

Breathing, Grounding, Hope.

TOOL:

- ▶ **Following the breathe- path to the present moment**
- ▶ **Hold for 4**
- ▶ **Belly Breathing**
- ▶ **Grounding – 4 colors you see**
- ▶ **3 things you hear**



Daniel Sutter

Practicing and Supporting Distress Tolerance

Innovate “coping skills”
Pre-existing Coping Skills



Wilderness TOOLS

- ▶ Distraction: Find us on the map
- ▶ Engage: Journal (and share)
- ▶ Color or draw
- ▶ Rock Labyrinth
- ▶ YOGA

What's your innovation?



Involvement

Regulation

Redirection

Journal

Draw

Exercise

Extremes of sensation- stream crossing

Survive something (a little adversity goes a long way)

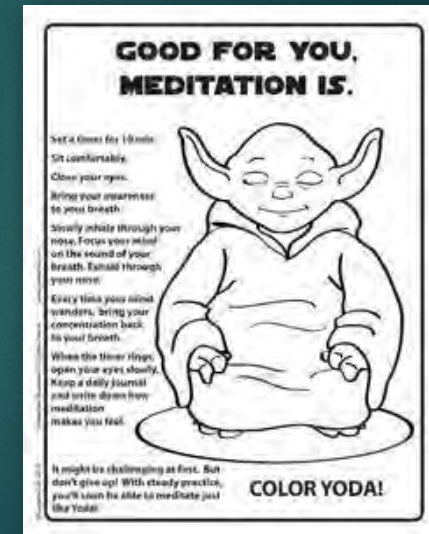
Breathing techniques-e.g., Deep breath in- count to 4- deep breath out

Coping Skills

Wilderness Style

Coping Skills Bingo				
get help	music	pop bubble wrap	exercise	write a story or poem
sing	stress ball	yoga	10 deep breaths	read
play outside	draw	FREE SPACE	paint	talk to someone
watch a movie	talk to a friend	eat healthy	do something different	friends
walk away	do something kind	Go for a walk	sleep	play a game

myfreebingocards.com



Program Support

Planning/ Training/Rehearsal

Screening

Rehearsal

After Action (Hot Wash) FEELING

Communication Terminology (Safe or Unsafe) Destructive or Disruptive



Communication Templates

Create YOUR program's Template

Establish the language you will use

Practice often

Review

This is _____, calling from _____ to request _____ (Support/Evac) for destructive behaviors:

Describe objective actions of the participant.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I'm requesting

- Guidance
- Tactical Support
- Evacuation support
- Other

Plan:

Contingency Plan:

Questions or comments?

Contact:

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Resources and References

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- ▶ National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Psychological First Aid <http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid>
- ▶ Teen suicide hotline: <https://teenlineonline.org>